

In taking leave of this little volume, we experience those painful emotions which characterize the departure of an old acquaintance. It has been announced in its preface, to be the last work which its favoured author shall ever submit to public inspection, and it is but a just tribute to the labour and toil of a professional career, embracing more than half a century, to pronounce this, like all other productions from the pen of Mr. Home, to be based upon practical observation, and is consequently the simple, but honest detail of facts. The candour with which it displays the mode of treatment, and its results, in one of the most baneful maladies to which flesh is heir, will insure for it an attentive perusal from every friend of medical science, and for its author a most earnest prayer that he may enjoy, in the wane of life, that repose which virtuous intent and industrious enterprise cannot fail to secure.

A. L. W.

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XIII. *A Treatise on Physiology applied to Pathology.* By F. J. V. BROUSSAIS, M. D. &c. &c. &c. Translated from the French, by JOHN BELL, M. D. &c. &c. and RENE LA ROCHE, M. D. &c. &c. Third American edition, with notes and a copious appendix, 8vo. pp. 666. Philadelphia, Carey & Lea.

It is not our intention, at this late period, to enter into a formal review of the Physiology of the celebrated professor of Val-de-Grace. The fact that three editions of the American translation have been called for within the short space of five years, very fully evinces the estimate in which the work is held by the medical public of this country. A patient study of his *Treatise on Physiology applied to Pathology*, is indeed indispensable to all who may desire to form a correct estimate of the value of the doctrines in relation to the nature and cure of diseases, advocated by M. Broussais; doctrines which have within a few years exerted so powerful, and in the estimation of many, beneficial an influence upon medical opinions and practice.

That the treatise before us is destitute of error either in matter of fact or in doctrine, we pretend not to assert. The contrary must necessarily be the case, as well from the nature of the subjects of which it treats, as from the peculiar circumstances under which the work was composed. With the exception of Bichat, in his *Treatise on General Anatomy*, no one had attempted before Broussais, the task of collecting the various facts known in relation to the healthy functions of the human system, and comparing them carefully with the state of the same functions during disease; of determining accurately the relative influence of the different organs upon each other, and the modifications which the morbid conditions of one set impress upon the actions of another, and of arranging the materials thus obtained into a systematic form. Had perfection crowned this difficult task, we should have considered its author as something more than mortal. Physiology as a science is yet in its infancy; every year new discoveries are made in relation to the vital functions, by which previous opinions are either confirmed or subverted; this added to the rapid accumulation of pathological facts, renders each new labourer in the field, with only a moiety of the talents and industry of Broussais, capable of detecting errors in his system, and of filling up and improving the general plan, the outlines of which he has so ably sketched. It is not for the invariable correctness of his opinions upon the subject of physiological pathology, although the

accuracy of very many of them has been established by subsequent investigation, that the system of M. Broussais commands our praise; it is from its having been the means of directing the attention of physicians to physiology as the only correct basis of pathology, and to the manner in which the study of the functions of our several organs during health leads us to an acquaintance with the morbid conditions of the latter, upon which the derangement of the functions constituting the phenomena of disease depend. By pursuing his pathological investigations in close connection with physiology, M. Broussais has confessedly removed many of the errors of preceding physicians, and if he has not invariably arrived at truth, he has indicated the only certain road by which it may be obtained. Morbid phenomena have in consequence already been divested of much of the mystery by which they were formerly enveloped, and the application of our remedies are now guided by system and their effects calculated with some degree of certainty, where formerly their administration was marked by the grossest empiricism.

Should the author be induced to prepare for publication a second edition of the present treatise, he will doubtless correct many of the errors which it now contains, and by availing himself of the labours of subsequent investigators in physiology and pathology, give to his system in other respects a greater degree of perfection.

But whatever may be our opinions as to its general merits or demerits, the *Treatise on Physiology applied to Pathology* constitutes a necessary introduction to the study of the other writings of its author, the principal of which have already or will shortly appear in an English dress.

The translation before us presents a very correct exposition of the views of the author as presented in the original—we say this from having made a comparison of the larger portion of it with the latter. For the fidelity with which the translators have performed their task, they deserve the thanks of all who are unable to consult the work in the French. It was one, we confess, of no common difficulty, as well from the novel forms of expression which the author has often been obliged to make use of in the statement of his doctrines, as from the obscure style in which much of the first part especially is composed. Inaccuracies in the translation of scientific works, though too often committed either from ignorance or carelessness, are at once an unfairness in relation to the authors, and a gross imposition upon the readers. It is on this account that we noticed so pointedly the able manner in which the present American translation of M. Broussais's physiology has been executed. But Drs. Bell and La Roche have not restricted themselves to a mere translation of the author's text; together with a very able introduction, in which a succinct view is presented of the present state of physiology and pathology, particularly in reference to the improvements for which both are indebted to the labours of M. Broussais, the present edition is accompanied with a copious appendix, in which some of the views of the author are commented upon, and many additional facts are adduced in illustration of the doctrines advanced by him, or for the purpose of testing them by the labours of more recent investigators. The whole constitutes a very valuable addition, and will be consulted with profit by the student of medicine, as well as by that large class of practitioners whose want of facilities or of means prevents them from commanding the use of an extensive li-

brary. The appendix contains a condensed view of the present state of our knowledge in relation to several points in physiology that have of late years engaged the attention of some of the ablest cultivators of the science, and which could scarcely be obtained from any other source. Thus articles E. and F. of the appendix, contain, the first, a highly interesting view of the opinions of Bell, Shaw, Bellingeri and others upon the fifth pair of nerves; and the second of the doctrines of Rolando, Philip, Allison, Brachet, and others of equal eminence, concerning the functions of the eighth pair. In these two articles the student will learn nearly all that is now known in relation to these two important portions of the nervous system, and in articles L. and M. we find an exposition of the discoveries of Mr. Charles Bell in regard to the nerves of sensation and of motion; and the nerves which he has termed irregular or respiratory. The information thus presented [could only have been acquired by a reference to various publications, to which few students have ready access. We may say the same of article P. upon the cause of the perforations of the stomach after death.

The first article of the appendix is a criticism upon the author's views in reference to the general vital property of the tissues. This he considers to be merely contractility, but the editors deny that contractility can be the fundamental vital property of all the tissues, inasmuch as many of them do not evidence in the slightest degree the phenomenon characteristic of this property in its correct signification—viz. contraction. While, however, they refuse to admit the correctness of M. Broussais's views respecting the universality of the property of contraction, but at the same time maintain that the exercise of the vital property, whatever it may be, is not necessarily attended in all the tissues with contraction, at least so far as we are able to ascertain, they are far from coinciding with those physiologists who contend for the existence of a plurality of properties. "So far," they remark, "from entertaining such views, we believe that there is in truth but one general property of the tissues, which we would designate by the term irritability or excitability, and that sensibility, which some have elevated to an equal rank with the other, must be regarded as simply the effect of the exercise of a function." But after all that has been said upon this point, we believe that we have as yet arrived at no clear conception of the fundamental vital properties. The doctrine which refers the various functions of the tissues to the exercise of a single vital power, will be readily received by many, from its apparent simplicity. We are not persuaded, however, that its truth has been by any means satisfactorily demonstrated. Two properties appear to us to be necessary for the performance of most, if not all the vital functions; the one the capacity of perceiving the appropriate stimuli by which the particular tissue is excited to act, and the second the capacity of performing, in consequence of such perception, the actions for which the tissue is destined. Whatever name may be given to these properties, facts would appear to indicate that they are distinct from each other, and that individually they present very important modifications in different tissues.

The second article of the appendix notices certain figurative expressions made use of by the author of the treatise, and by which he renders himself liable to the very criticism which he has applied to similar modes of expression when employed by others. The censure which the translators have visited on

M. Broussais is merited, in consequence of his severe reprobation of the same error when committed by his predecessors and contemporaries. We must nevertheless admit that there is considerable difficulty, when treating of mere abstractions, to avoid an occasional indulgence in *ontological* language. What is particularly to be objected to, is not so much the "*ontologisms*," the phenomena of health and disease, when care has been taken to express clearly the dependance of these phenomena upon the normal or abnormal actions of the several organs, as in mistaking, as is too much the case with many physicians, even at the present day, the phenomena of health and disease, but especially the latter, for *entities*—in other words, for something entirely independent of, and even of acting upon and controlling the actions of material organs of the body. Thus we hear daily of fever invading and destroying an organ, of gout wandering through the system to locate itself upon the weaker parts, and of inflammation travelling or being driven from one organ to another. Upon such absurdities have pathological and therapeutical opinions been repeatedly founded.

The article of the appendix marked I. will be found a very able criticism upon some of the opinions advanced by M. Broussais in his chapter on the intellectual and moral faculties.

We are persuaded that the present edition will find its way into the hands of all who are not already in possession of an English translation of the work.

P. C.

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XIV. *Handbuch der Anatomie des Menschlichen Körpers*. Von Dr. ANTON RÖMER, Sr. k. k. apostol. Majestät Rath, Stabsfeldarzte, ordentlichem, öffentlichem, Professor der Anatomie an der k. k. Medicinisch-chirurgischen Josephs-Akademie, &c. &c. Erster Band. pp. 308. Wien, 1831.  
*Manual of Human Anatomy*. By Dr. ANTON RÖMER, Professor of Anatomy in the Imperial Joseph's Medico-chirurgical Academy, &c. &c. Vol. I. Vienna, 1831.

It must be confessed that at the present time there is no scarcity of elementary treatises on anatomy; yet it must have fallen to the lot of most teachers of that subject to observe, that many of those which have been as yet published, abound in so many defects, both as regards arrangement and execution, as to render them unfit for the purposes for which they were intended, or of very limited utility to the student. Many have attempted to remedy these deficiencies, yet in most instances, if they have avoided the faults of their predecessors, they have committed others of equal magnitude, and have left the difficulty but slightly rectified. Every professor has, besides, his own peculiar views upon many points, and pursues an arrangement somewhat at variance with that adopted by others, so that to enable the student to derive full benefit from his instructions, it is almost indispensable that he should have a class-book drawn up in accordance with the order of his course. These are a few of the motives by which Dr. Römer has been actuated in undertaking the preparation of the work, the title of which we have announced above.

The first volume only has been as yet published. Besides some general definitions of the subject, it embraces the consideration of the several elements of the organization, or of general anatomy, and the description of the bones, liga-